

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 01269 01 OF 02 091523Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9032

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 1269

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CY, OVIP (CLIFFORD, CLARK M.)

SUBJECT: CLIFFORD MISSION: DISCUSSION WITH BITSIOS OF PROGRAM
AND SCHEDULE

REF: A. ATHENS 1235, B. ATHENS 1192, C. STATE 27723

1. FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS AND I MET AT MID-DAY TODAY TO
DISCUSS PLANS FOR THE CLIFFORD MISSION VISIT. HE BEGAN
BY ASKING HOW MR. CLIFFORD WISHED TO ARRANGE HIS PROGRAM WHILE
IN ATHENS AND I SAID I WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS
VERY FLEXIBLE, WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE GREEK GOVERNMENT'S
VIEWS AND WOULD NO DOUBT TRY TO ACCOMMODATE HIMSELF TO THEM.

2. BITSIOS THEN OUTLINED HIS PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS, ADDING
THAT THESE WERE TENTATIVE AS HE HAD NOT BEEN ABLE AS YET
TO PIN DOWN THE FINAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR A CLIFFORD MEETING AND
POSSIBLE SOCIAL GET-TOGETHER WITH PRIME MINISTER
CARAMANLIS. BITSIOS SUGGESTED THAT CLIFFORD ARRIVE AND
DISEMBARK AT THE GOG'S VIP FACILITY ON THE OLYMPIC SIDE OF
THE AIRPORT ON THURSDAY AFTERNOON, FEBRUARY 17. BITSIOS WOULD
GREET HIM THERE AND ESCORT HIM TO A PRIVATE LOUNGE FOR A FEW
MINUTES FOLLOWING WHICH THE TWO MEN COULD GO TO AN ADJACENT
PRESS ROOM FOR PICTURES WITH WELCOMING REMARKS BY BITSIOS AND
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AN ARRIVAL STATEMENT BY CLIFFORD. THEREAFTER, I AND MY STAFF
WOULD ESCORT CLIFFORD AND HIS PARTY INTO ATHENS TO THEIR
LODGING ACCOMMODATIONS (SEPTEL). BITSIOS SAID HE ASSUMED THAT
CLIFFORD AND HIS PARTY WOULD WISH TO SPEND THE REST OF THE
AFTERNOON AND THE EVENING PRIVATELY WITH ME AND MY STAFF,
SINCE IN ANY CASE HE (BITSIOS) AND OTHER TOP GREEK OFFICIALS
WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE THAT EVENING BECAUSE OF PRESIDENT

TSATSOS' BANQUET. HOWEVER, HE ADDED, IF CLIFFORD WISHED TO HAVE SOME KIND OF MEETING WITH HIM LATE THAT AFTERNOON OR EARLY EVENING HE WOULD TRY AND ARRANGE IT, ALTHOUGH HE PREFERRED TO BEGIN THEIR TALKS THE NEXT MORNING. I TOLD HIM I THOUGHT THAT WOULD BE SATISFACTORY.

3. BITSIOS ENVISAGES A FULL MORNING AND LUNCH FOR BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18. HE SUGGESTED THAT CLIFFORD AND HIS PARTY COME TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AT 10:00 OR 10:30 A.M. TO BEGIN THE DISCUSSIONS. HE WAS ALSO TRYING TO ARRANGE A HALF HOUR CALL BY CLIFFORD ON PRESIDENT TSATSOS AND THAT COULD CONCEIVABLY BE THE FIRST APPOINTMENT FRIDAY MORNING, FOLLOWING WHICH THE TALKS WOULD COMMENCE AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. BITSIOS THOUGHT THESE TALKS WOULD CONTINUE UNTIL 1:00 OR 1:30 P.M., FOLLOWING WHICH HE WOULD HOST A LUNCH FOR THE CLIFFORD GROUP. AFTER LUNCH (ABOUT 3:00 OR 3:30 P.M.) THE TWO GROUPS WOULD PART.

4. FOR FRIDAY EVENING, BITSIOS SAID ARRANGEMENTS WERE STILL TO BE MADE. CARAMANLIS USUALLY RETURNS TO HIS OFFICE ABOUT 6:30 OR 7:00 P.M., AFTER AN AFTERNOON REST, AND VERY PROBABLY WOULD WISH TO RECEIVE CLIFFORD AT THAT TIME. CARAMANLIS IS ALSO CONSIDERING HAVING A DINNER WITH CLIFFORD THAT EVENING (PROBABLY AROUND 9:00 P.M.-- INFORMAL) OR, IF NOT, CARAMANLIS MAY SUGGEST THAT CLIFFORD HAVE LUNCH WITH HIM ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19. BITSIOS SAID HE EXPECTED CARAMANLIS TO DECIDE WITHIN THE NEXT DAY OR TWO AND UNTIL HE DID SO WE WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT MAKING OTHER ARRANGEMENTS.

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5. I OFFERED TO HOST A DINNER FRIDAY EVENING OR A LUNCH ON SATURDAY, TO INCLUDE BOTH GREEK AND AMERICAN OFFICIALS, AND I COULD DO WHICH EVER ONE CARAMANLIS DID NOT WISH TO DO. BITSIOS SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS THIS WITH CARAMANLIS AND LET ME KNOW, ALTHOUGH HE INDICATED IT DOUBTFUL THAT CARAMANLIS HIMSELF WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR MORE THAN ONE MEAL, IF THAT.

6. FOLLOWING THE SATURDAY LUNCH, WHOEVER GAVE IT, THE OFFICIAL PORTION OF CLIFFORD'S VISIT WOULD END, ALTHOUGH THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND THE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL WOULD GO TO THE AIRPORT TO SEE HIM OFF ON HIS SUNDAY DEPARTURE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ATHENS 1269

7. BITSIOS SAID THAT NORMALLY IN THE CASE OF A VISIT SUCH AS THIS HE WOULD EXPECT TO SIT AND LISTEN FIRST TO A PRESENTATION BY THE VISITOR BUT HE ASSUMED THAT CLIFFORD WANTED TO HEAR A FULL EXPOSITION OF GREEK VIEWS ON IMPORTANT TOPICS. I SAID BY ALL MEANS, THAT I UNDERSTOOD A MAIN PURPOSE OF CLIFFORD'S MISSION WAS TO LISTEN AND LEARN THE GREEK VIEWS AND TO HAD DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING THEM. IN THAT CASE, BITSIOS SAID HE WOULD PROPOSE AN AGENDA FOR THEIR FRIDAY MORNING MEETING CONSISTING OF FOUR MAIN TOPICS: 1) U.S.- GREEK RELATIONS (INCLUDING THE BASE NEGOTIATIONS); 2) NATO; 3) GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS AND PROBLEMS, AND 4) CYPRUS. BITSIOS SAID HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO MAKE A PRESENTATION AND DISCUSS THE GOG'S VIEWS ON ALL OF THESE ITEMS, AND WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY HIS TOP ADVISORS FOR THE MEETING (TZOUNIS, CARAYANNIS, CHRYSOSPATHIS, AND MACHERITSAS, AMONG OTHERS). IF CLIFFORD WANTED TO DISCUSS OTHER TOPICS WHICH WOULD REQUIRE ADVANCE PREPARATION HERE, BITSIOS WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING THEM. FOLLOWING THIS FRIDAY MORNING DISCUSSION MEETING, BITSIOS WOULD ALSO BE RECEPTIVE TO TAKING CLIFFORD AND ME (IF MR. CLIFFORD WISHES TO HIS OFFICE FOR A PRIVATE TETE-A-TETE BEFORE LUNCH.

8. IN OUR CONVERSATION IT BECAME ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT CARAMANLIS IS LOOKING UPON CLIFFORD'S VISIT AS A MISSION FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TO "THE GREEK GOVERNMENT" OF PRIME MINISTER
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CARAMANLIS. THEREFORE, BITSIOS' INITIAL REACTION WAS THAT CLIFFORD SHOULD NOT SEEK MEETINGS IN GREECE WITH ANYONE OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT. INDEED, HE SEEMED TO BE THINKING IN TERMS OF ONLY A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF KEY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. THE ONE EXCEPTION THAT WE DISCUSSED WAS GEORGE MAVROS, PRINCIPAL LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION. BITSIOS SEEMED TO THINK IT WOULD BE ALL RIGHT TO INCLUDE MAVROS IN A LUNCH OR DINNER AT MY RESIDENCE

AT WHICH OTHER GOG OFFICIALS WERE ALSO PRESENT, PROBABLY FRIDAY EVENING OR SATURDAY NOON. OTHER GOG OFFICIALS BEING CONSIDERED ARE DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF AND COORDINATION MINISTER PAPALIGOURAS.

9. PRESS. BITSIOS AGREED THAT CLIFFORD SHOULD MAKE OR RELEASE AN ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE STATEMENT, AND THAT ON A COUPLE OF OCCASIONS DURING HIS STAY CLIFFORD AND THE PRINCIPAL GREEK OFFICIAL AT A SUBSTANTIVE MEETING COULD MAKE A FEW BRIEF REMARKS TO THE PRESS FOLLOWING THE MEETING. BITSIOS SAID THAT IT WAS ENTIRELY UP TO CLIFFORD IF HE WISHED TO HAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FROM ATHENS, BUT, IF SO, HE WOULD ASSUME THAT THE EMBASSY WOULD MAKE ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR IT -- AND THAT IT WOULD BE BASICALLY AN "AMERICAN AFFAIR". (I ALSO HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE ADVISABILITY OF A PRESS CONFERENCE AS CLIFFORD CONCLUDES HIS VISIT TO ATHENS AND BEFORE ARRIVING IN ANKARA AND NICOSIA, AND WILL ADDRESS THIS QUESTION AGAIN IN A SUBSEQUENT MESSAGE.)

10. SECURITY. BITSIOS SAID THAT THE GOG WOULD MAKE FULL PROVISION FOR APPROPRIATE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS.

11. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH MANY OTHER ASPECTS OF THE VISIT REMAIN TO BE COVERED, I WISH TO GET THIS MESSAGE OFF AT ONCE AND WOULD APPRECIATE A PROMPT REACTION FROM WASHINGTON IF FOR ANY REASON THE MAIN OUTLINES OF THE EMERGING OFFICIAL PROGRAM APPEAR IN ANY WAY TO BE UNSATISFACTORY, AS I CAN STILL INFLUENCE THEIR DEVELOPMENT HERE. ASIDE FROM THE OFFICIAL EVENTS INDICATED ABOVE ALL REMAINING TIME OF CLIFFORD AND HIS PARTY CAN BE USED

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IN ATHENS AS THEY DESIRE. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE WILL BE AMPLE TIME THURSDAY AFTERNOON AND EVENING FOR IN-HOUSE DISCUSSIONS, BRIEFINGS AND EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. I WOULD PLAN TO HAVE THE PARTY FOR AN INFORMAL DINNER. THERE WILL ALSO BE SOME LIMITED TIME FOR SIGHTSEEING IN AND AROUND ATHENS SATURDAY AFTERNOON AND SUNDAY MORNING.

12. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE FACILITIES OF THE EMBASSY AND ITS STAFF WILL BE FULLY AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT AND ASSIST WITH THE CLIFFORD MISSION. MRS. KUBISCH AND I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT MR. CLIFFORD AND MR. NIMETZ WILL STAY WITH US AND ONLY REGRET THAT WE DO NOT HAVE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THE ENTIRE PARTY (SEPTEL TO FOLLOW ON LODGING ACCOMMODATIONS).

13. WE WILL SEND A FURTHER MESSAGE LATER INDICATING OPTIONS AVAILABLE FOR USE OF TIME WHEN NOT ENGAGED IN MEETINGS OR SOCIAL FUNCTIONS WITH GREEK OFFICIALS. NO FORMAL FUNCTIONS ARE ENVISAGED WHILE THE PARTY IS IN ATHENS (ALTHOUGH THERE IS A MAJOR AMERICAN COMMUNITY BLACK TIE DINNER-DANCE, ARRANGED BY THE PROPELLER CLUB,

AT THE ATHENS HILTON, FRIDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 18, AND ARRANGE-
MENTS COULD NO DOUBT BE MADE FOR ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF THE PARTY
TO ATTEND IF THEY WISHED, ALTHOUGH I AM ASSUMING AND BELIEVE
IT PREFERABLE THAT MR. CLIFFORD AND MR. NIMETZ SPEND THAT EVENING
PRIVATELY IF THEY ARE NOT INVOLVED WITH CARAMANLIS).
KUBISCH

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